1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

against the people of Bida, on whom they were dependent for the marketing of their produce, and whom they now held responsible for the disastrous fall in prices.

Legal unification goes a step farther. Dependence upon a common forum of morality evokes a certain group cohesion, a common orientation of mind at least in that all the component groups will share common hopes—and fears—and a common interest in whatever affects the judicial organization. If we can test the strength of economic co-operation by the facts of volume of trade and traffic and the relation between productive and consuming areas, we can test this moral reorientation by examining the measure of interest which the various groups evince in legal change. I shall show later how keenly the people everywhere in Nupe follow changes in the law. But I shall also show that this interest, all the more intense because such vital issues are involved, does not invariably foster the dissemination of true, or reassuring, knowledge: often it spells suspicion and fear of a biased jurisdiction and legislation. Whole sections feel themselves tricked and threatened by this dangerous law and reject co-operation with its agents and the groups which it seems to favour.

Dynastic and political changes engage the attention of the people no less strongly. When the late Emir died and a new Emir was appointed, and when the appointment of the highest royal ranks was to take place in Bida, the events elicited comments from many groups from which one would not have expected such interest in 'higher politics'. One day I was standing in a Bida street, talking to a brass-smith, when the *Kpotũ*, one of the disappointed claimants to the throne, rode past. The brass-smith looked after him, shook his head, and said to me: 'It must have been a great shock to him when someone else was appointed *Etsu*.' In Kutigi, the district of the *Kpotũ*, the older men knew all about the rumour of the *Kpotũ*'s illness, which had been given out in Bida as an explanation or excuse for his not having been promoted to a higher rank. And in Mokwa, the district of the *Rani*, the elders told me with amusement of the abortive attempt of their District Head to obtain promotion by supernatural intervention: how he had gone to Rabá and prayed at the tomb of Mallam Dendo for the success of his political aspirations.

'Unity of interest' in this sense obtains also with respect to all things that affect the people, and the news of such events would travel fast from place to place. In March 1936, at a Bida wedding feast, I happened to hear girls sing a song the words of which sounded unfamiliar to me. I found it to be a new topical 'stanza' which referred to the activities of the Sleeping Sickness Commission which even then was working in eastern Nupe, i.e. Agaie or Dibo country. The song gave voice to the suspicions and fears of the people and their anxiety to escape, by whatever means, the unpopular treatment. The song runs as follows:

> The needle is coming,
> The Mallam of the needle,
> The father of threading.
> O let me go,
> And not only for my money [i.e. also for pity's sake].

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

The needle killed the men of Dibo,
And also the men of Baro [a town in that district].
O father, save me and let me go.
If you must use your needle,
Do not let it bite me.

The 'needle' is the injection needle, and the 'Mallam of the needle' the native medical assistant who was performing the injection and who, according to the testimony of the song, could be bribed to spare the patient the (very painful) injection. The testimony, incidentally, was true; some time later I learned that one of the native medical assistants had actually taken bribes from the people, and had been apprehended not long after I had heard the song.

To summarize: political co-ordination calls into being a co-ordination of interest—actual interest units—which in certain respects overcomes the heterogeneity of tribe, culture, and even class, and includes the whole people. Yet as economic co-operation goes its own ways, often disregarding political frontiers, so the other forms of 'reorientation' may tend to further the formation of new, even antagonistic, groups rather than to cement the political unit. The 'interest units' are, paradoxically, units that spell disunity. The paradox is easily solved: the common interests round which these units are focused are such that they show a different aspect and portend different things to rulers and ruled, or to adherents of different political factions. The units which they create may efface tribal and cultural divisions, and temporarily even the barriers of class: but in critical moments they will only put forth more forcibly the existing disparities and forms of antagonism.

We turn, then, to another group of integrative factors which seem to succeed where the interest units fail. They wield integration which endorses unconditionally the political unit. The secret of their success lies in that they attempt unity and integration in spheres in which the political interests suffer such integration to exist, and in which the divergent political interests are overcome by some stronger incentive to unity.

The study of the unity which the Nupe state has achieved, or is achieving, reveals the effectiveness of two main groups of such incentives. To formulate them tentatively: one is self-enhancement—especially a self-enhancement that (in the language of psycho-analysis) 'sublimates' the humiliating experience of political dependence and inferiority; the other, the appeal of the mystic and supernatural. The first incentive reveals itself in the progressive identification of the people with the cultural values typical of the social *elite*; the second, in their readiness to adopt new myths and embrace religious beliefs and practices, which are vessels of political 'propaganda' at the same time. The two incentives may join forces, self-enhancement being offered in the realm of religion —as in the spreading of Islam, the religion of the rulers and conquerors, among the subject groups of the kingdom. We can also discern the agency of a third incentive, more unspecific and subsidiary in nature, which, as it were, canalizes the influence of the other two, namely, the